

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2017

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Members of the House Georgia Caucus and friends of Georgia, we write to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Georgia, and to reiterate our firm, bipartisan support of one of our most reliable and steadfast regional partners.

Over the last 25 years, Georgia has continued to develop its democratic institutions. Georgia has achieved substantial progress in both political and economic development by strengthening its institutions, reducing government regulation, fighting corruption, and simplifying its tax code.

Freedom House has acknowledged Georgia's largely free and diverse media environment. Transparency International has noted Georgia's steady improvement in its corruption index. The World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business Report" named Georgia the most improved country in the world over the past twelve years with regard to its free market business environment.

Georgia's accomplishments are even more striking against the backdrop of continued Russian military aggression. Russia has illegally occupied twenty percent of Georgian territory since it invaded Georgia in 2008. Russian troops have continued the process of creeping annexation and frequently commit human rights violations and kidnappings throughout the occupied regions and adjacent territories.

Despite its own security challenges, Georgia plays a significant role in ensuring global security, namely in the fight against terrorism. Georgia is a committed and reliable U.S. partner, most notably manifested by serving shoulder-to-shoulder with American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. This country of less than four million people is one of the largest troop contributors to the international mission in Afghanistan, and Georgian soldiers have been killed in combat. Georgia's military spending also exceeds two percent of its GDP, a benchmark that only five NATO member states currently meet. We ask that you continue historical U.S. support for Georgia's bid to join NATO.

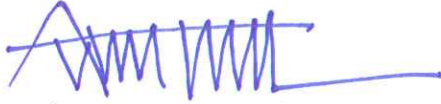
Georgia has a business-friendly environment and is a natural home for U.S. companies that want to do business in the wider Caucasus and Black Sea region. As a result, U.S. trade with Georgia has grown significantly over the past decade. In 2016, the U.S. exported over \$324 million of goods to Georgia. We strongly encourage the Administration to make progress toward negotiations on a U.S.-Georgia Free Trade Agreement. The U.S.-Georgia High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment should produce a clear understanding of the commitments and obligations required for negotiations on a free trade agreement. Such an agreement would be beneficial for the U.S., Georgia, and the entire Caucasus and Central Asian region.

Georgia has been a reliable and strategic partner of the United States for more than 25 years. In December 2016, the Parliament of Georgia passed a bipartisan resolution affirming the U.S. as the major strategic partner and ally of Georgia. In September 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed its own resolution

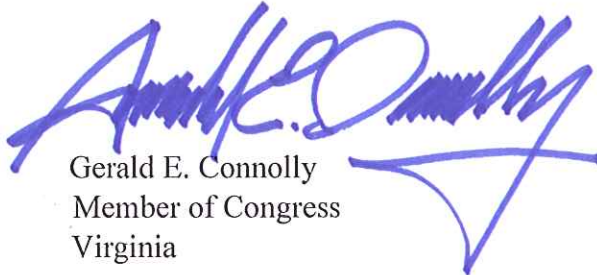
(H.Res.660), introduced by Georgia Caucus co-chairs Representatives Gerald E. Connolly and Ted Poe, expressing its unwavering support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

We reaffirm our bipartisan commitment to support Georgia and encourage the Administration to strengthen this strategic relationship. It is critical that the United States sends a strong message that we stand with Georgia, just as its people have done for us.

Sincerely,



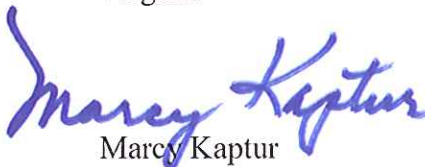
Ted Poe  
Member of Congress  
Texas



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress  
Virginia



Paul Cook  
Member of Congress  
California



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress  
Ohio



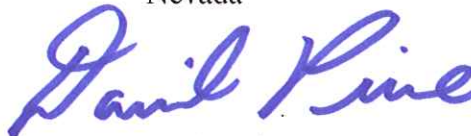
Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress  
Ohio



Dina Titus  
Member of Congress  
Nevada



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress  
California



David Price  
Member of Congress  
North Carolina



Adam Kinzinger  
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Randy Weber  
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Massachusetts






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Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress  
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David Cicilline  
Member of Congress  
Rhode Island



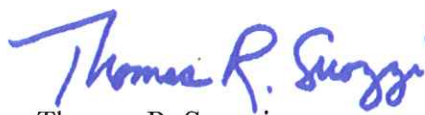
Tom McClintock  
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California



Brendan F. Boyle  
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